

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VETERINARY COMMAND**  
**OPERATIONAL RATIONS INSPECTION PROCEDURE (OPRATS IP05)**  
**Revision 7, 3 March 2011**

**Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MREs) Inspections**

1.0 **PURPOSE:** To establish standardized inspection procedures for Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MREs).

2.0 **SCOPE:**

2.1 This document applies to Army Veterinary Inspectors (AVI) assigned to post, camp, or station with responsibility for performing receipt, in-storage, warranty, prior to issue, and special inspections of MRE's.

2.2 This document discusses situations, procedures, and inspection guidance not covered in DSCP Handbook 4155.2 and DSCPH 4155.2 Appendix A.

2.3 The procedure for using the VETCOM Lotus Notes MRE Inspection Database is discussed in VETCOM OPRATS IP06 – MRE Inspection Database.

3.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

3.1 See DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph V.

3.2 See DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Paragraph I.G.

3.3 See VETCOM OPRATS IP02.

4.0 **REFERENCES:**

4.1 MEDCOM Regulation 40-28

4.2 MEDCOM Pamphlet 40-13

4.3 DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Inspection of Composite Rations

4.4 DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Inspection of Meals, Ready-to-Eat

4.5 VETCOM Handbook 40-3, Installation Support Plan (ISP) Program

**NOTE:** Ensure to check the DLA-Troop Support website, <https://www.dscp.dla.mil/subs/support/qapubs/index.asp> , for most current edition of DSCPH 4155.2 Appendix A.

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**5.0 PROCEDURES:**

**5.1 Types and Frequency of Inspections.**

5.1.1 Receipt Inspection – IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph VIII A.

5.1.2 In-storage Inspection – IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph VIII B.

5.1.3 Warranty Inspection – IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph VIII C.

5.1.4 Prior to Sale or Shipment (Surveillance) Inspection – IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph VIII D.

5.1.5 Special Inspection – IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Paragraph VIII D.

**5.2 Formation of Lots. IAW DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A.**

**5.2.1 Normal Inspection.**

5.2.1.1 Table A (for use with Table C) – Lot size for “shipping containers” is the total number of modules.

5.2.1.1.1 The DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A does not distinguish procedures for disproportionate lots of “A” and “B” cases. Therefore, when utilizing a hard copy of DSCP Form 5117 to record inspection results, follow the procedures below:

5.2.1.1.1.1 The “Lot Size” for Tables A and B will be expressed as “modules” rather than “cases”. Each lot size of “A” and “B” is determined separately. This is in reality performing the same function as the Lotus Notes database, the performance of two separate inspections. Determine disposition utilizing the corresponding “Action Numbers”.

5.2.1.1.1.2 The “Lot Size” for Tables D, E, H, and I will remain as “menus”. The total number of “A” and “B” cases are added together and multiplied by 12 menus. This is in reality performing the same function as the Lotus Notes database, the performance of one inspection.

5.2.1.2 Tables D and H (for use with Tables F, G and J) - Lot size for “menu bags and contents to include accessory bags and contents, and destructive open package inspection (DOPI)” is the total number of ration menus. The Lotus Notes MRE Inspection database automatically calculates these lot sizes by adding together the number of “A” and “B” cases from Table C and multiplying by 12 menus.

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5.2.2 Special Inspection. Determine lot size IAW DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Paragraph 3, Special Inspection Guidance.

5.3 Sampling Plan. IAW DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A.

5.3.1 Normal Inspection.

5.3.1.1 Table A – The sample unit for “shipping containers” is one MRE module. The Lotus Notes MRE Inspection database has been designed to generate the sample sizes and action numbers for “A” and “B” cases independently. This allows for instances when only “A” or “B” cases are to be inspected. When inspecting cases of only “A” or “B”, if an action number for either the “A” or “B” case is met or exceeded, it is considered as meeting or exceeding the action number see paragraph 6.3.

5.3.1.2 Tables D and H – The sample unit for “menu bags and contents to include accessory bags and contents, and destructive open package inspection (DOPI)” is one ration menu. The samples will be selected from the sample cases used for the Table A (shipping container) inspection. The sample size generated by the Lotus Notes MRE Inspection database is for both the “A” and “B” cases combined. The AVI will draw sample menus from the “A” and “B” cases in direct proportion to their lot size if a grand lot and proportionally from each sample case if a single lot.

5.3.2 Special Inspection. Determine lot size IAW DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Paragraph 3, Special Inspection Guidance.

5.4 Performing the Inspection. Perform IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, Appendix A.

5.4.1 Time Temperature Indicator (TTI).

5.4.1.1 TTIs are read by comparing the color of the indicator’s center to the outer ring surrounding it. AVI will use a TTI Comparator Card to perform this reading. Initially, the TTI has a bull’s-eye appearance, with the center being much lighter than the darker outer ring. The center is designed to darken with time and temperature, darkening more rapidly as the temperature increases. The theory behind the TTI is that there is a correlation between the appearance of the indicator and remaining shelf life of the ration.

5.4.1.2 The TTI’s appearance correlates directly with the numerical stages of the indicator (see TTI Chart below). When the numerical stage of the indicator increases above the initial “0” reading, the likelihood of finding time and temperature related defects in the ration increases. The AVI will take extra diligence when inspecting these rations. A change in condition code may be required based on the inspection results. Do not use the numerical reading as the sole source for determined condition code. The chart below shows the approximate remaining shelf life in months for rations stored at various temperatures for each of the numerical stages.

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<b>TTI CHART</b>				
<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Numerical Stage</b>	<b>“Approximate” Remaining Shelf Life (months)</b>		
		<b>60° F</b>	<b>80° F</b>	<b>100° F</b>
Center much lighter than outer ring	0	210	36	6.4
Center lighter than outer ring	1	146	24	4.5
Center slightly lighter than outer ring	2	106	17	3.2
Center same shade as outer ring	3	End of	expected	shelf life
Center slightly darker than outer ring	4	Exceeds	expected	shelf life
Center much darker than outer ring	5	Exceeds	expected	shelf life
<b>Note:</b> Additional information regarding TTI’s can be found in the <b>Lotus Notes Operational Rations Doc Library</b> .				

#### 5.4.2 Flameless Ration Heaters

5.4.2.1 Follow guidance posted in Lotus Notes Operational Rations Doc Library or at DSCP website, <https://www.dscp.dla.mil/subs/support/qapubs/appa/dispinst.pdf> .

5.4.2.2 Do not forget to contact local installation HAZMAT authority and/or fire department to see if there are any special local policies for disposal.

5.4.2.3 The AVI will activate the flameless ration heaters as part of the inspection procedure and disposal of activated heaters can be treated just like normal trash.

**NOTE:** The guidance in 5.4.2.1 & 5.4.2.2 above mainly deals with inactivated heaters.

#### 5.4.3 Substitutions (Mistakenly called Wrong or Incorrect Items)

5.4.3.1 MREs occasionally may contain wrong or incorrect items IAW menu bag and DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Table S. This is acceptable and should not be scored as a defect. The assembler is granted permission from the contracting officer to substitute “like items” at times. The inspectors assigned to the MRE assembly plants verify these substitutions. Rather than score wrong or incorrect items as a defect, make a note in the “Additional Inspection Comments” section of the report (DSCP Form 5117).

5.4.3.2 If inspectors have concerns about the substitutions found during the surveillance inspection, please contact by email the Chief, Operational Rations Section, VETCOM HQ. Again, do not score as a defect during the inspection.

5.5 Nonconformance Reporting – Perform IAW DSCP Handbook 4155.2, and DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A.

5.6 **CURSORY INSPECTIONS** (General Examination for Transportation Damage/Obvious Defects).

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5.6.1 A complete Receipt/Routine inspection is not required for the following situations:

5.6.1.1 If the MREs are delivered to the installation directly from the MRE assembly plant, a full receipt inspection is not required. Inspect these deliveries only for transportation damage/obvious defects.

5.6.1.2 If the MREs are delivered from a depot or other installation and a current (within the last 30 days) inspection report, completed at the point of origin (for example, a depot, not another installation that received the same lot) accompanies the shipment or a current MRE inspection report is posted in the MRE Inspection database for the lot number and manufacturer/assembler delivered. The origin report in the MRE Inspection Database or accompanying inspection report should match the lot number and manufacturer/assembler information in the receipt/delivery documentation, as well as the marking on the shipping container, plus the delivery origin. Inspect these deliveries only for transportation damage/obvious defects.

**5.7 SURVEILLANCE INSPECTIONS.**

**NOTE:** Although MEDCOM Pamphlet 40-13 references “Serviced-owned rations should be inspected annually at a minimum”. The correct frequency for surveillance inspections is referenced in paragraph 5.7.1 below and DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Paragraph II.M.Step 13. page 12.

5.7.1 Surveillance inspections are performed on 6-months intervals following the last completed inspection. The last completed inspection could have been a receipt/cursory or a surveillance/routine, it does not matter. After entering “Date of Inspection” in Part I, the “Next Inspection Due” in Part V automatically defaults to 6 months. The only way the “Next Inspection Due” is less than 6 months is if the Condition Code selected is less than Condition Code A. “Next Inspection Due” will NEVER be more than 6 months from the last completed inspection. This is also covered in DSCPH 4155.2, Appendix A, Paragraph II.M.Step 13. page 12.

5.7.2 Surveillance inspections are not required for MREs held in commercially contracted cold storage (31-35 degrees Fahrenheit) locations, or for MREs on ships that are maintained as Prepositioned War Reserve, Afloat rations. However a full receipt inspection will be performed at the first destination where these rations are sent after being removed from these storage locations.

**6.0 RECORDS, REPORTS AND FORMS:**

6.1 With the exception of small, 5 modules (A + B case) or less, “turn-ins” the AVI will post all MRE surveillance inspection reports, whether there is a nonconformance or no defect was noted, in the VETCOM Lotus Notes MRE Inspection database.

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6.2 The procedure for using the VETCOM Lotus Notes MRE Inspection Database is discussed on VETCOM OPRATS IP06 - MRE Inspection Database.

6.3 The AVI will generate a local copy of DSCP Form 5117 for MRE “turn-in” inspections. The VETCOM Lotus Notes MRE Inspection database can be used to generate the local DSCP Form 5117, however, do not save it, once printed delete or abandon the report. If the turn-in report is accidentally saved in the database, email the Chief, Operational Rations Section, VETCOM HQ with a link to the report for deletion.

6.4 At time of receipt or turn-in only equal numbers of unopened “A” and “B” cases should be accepted. There should be equal numbers of “A” and “B” cases unless an odd number of cases are received. If an odd number of cases are received there should be only one extra “A” or “B” case, which will not affect inspection results or recommendations. If there are unequal numbers of “A” and “B” cases report the discrepancy to the Accountable/Receiving Officer and recommend disposition/rejection of unmatched cases. At the request of the Accountable Officer, the inspector may perform a separate inspection of the unmatched MRE cases as a separate lot. In such an inspection, sample size will be IAW with sampling tables as a separate lot. MREs of a single case type will not be placed in Condition Code A. They must be stored and issued separately with priority to issue them first to remove from inventory.

6.5 All reports should be completed and approved by the supervisor within 10 days. If the report needs to be deleted from the database, email the Chief, Operational Rations Section, VETCOM HQ with a link to the report for deletion. Reports that remain in draft or awaiting approval for more than 10 days without an explanation provided to the Chief, Operational Rations Section, VETCOM HQ, will be reported to the applicable RVC Veterinary Services Technician for action.

6.6 A CVR will be completed for each ration inspection to establish a record in the ISP application and capture the manpower required.